



24-Month STEM OPT Extension Request Form

Please complete this form after reading the instructions in the following pages. Submit required materials in their entirety to ISSSOffice@rpi.edu. Please allow up to two weeks processing time.

Name (Last, First, Middle): _____

RIN: _____ SEVIS: N _____

Non-RPI Email: _____ Phone #: _____

Personal Address: _____

Number Street Apt. #

City State Zip Code

Employer Name: _____

Employer Address: _____

Number Street Suite. #

City State Zip Code

Employment Start Date: _____ Hours per week: _____

Employer EIN: _____ - _____ Employer e-Verify #: _____

Job Title: _____ Supervisor: _____

Supervisor Phone #: _____ Supervisor email: _____

Please briefly explain how this employment is directly related to your course work at Rensselaer: _____

I certify that the above information is true and correct, and that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the information on the following pages and on the I-983 form, including updating the ISSS Office of any changes to personal information, employer information, and status within 10 business days.

Signature _____ Date: _____

24-month STEM OPT Extension Instructions

Who is eligible for the 24-month extension?

You can apply for OPT extensions if you meet ALL of the following criteria:

- 1) You are an F-1 student currently authorized for 12-month OPT
- 2) You graduated with a degree in certain “STEM” fields, as defined by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Under the new 24 month STEM ruling, this may include previously earned STEM degrees within the past 10 years. Please contact ISSS for more information regarding previously earned degrees. The STEM list is as follows:
<http://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2014/stem-list.pdf>
- 3) Your employment is directly related to the STEM field, your employer is e-Verified, you will be full-time (20+ hours per week), and you and your employer have completed and agree to abide by the *Form I-983: Training Plan for STEM OPT Students*

When do I apply?

USCIS must receive your application no earlier than 90 days before your current OPT EAD end date, and no later than the end date. Currently, the ISSS Office requests you allow **2 weeks processing time** for our office to review your documents and process a new I-20 with 24-month STEM recommendation.

How do I apply?

Step 1

Before submitting anything to USCIS, you must request a new I-20 with 24-month STEM recommendation from the ISSS Office. To do so, please submit the following documents via email for review:

1. *Completed 24-Month STEM OPT Extension Request Form*- page 1 of this packet
2. *Completed Form I-983: Training Plan for STEM OPT Students*- available online at <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/stem-opt-hub>. You keep a copy, our office keeps a copy, and your employer keeps a copy.
3. *Letter from your employer for USCIS*- The letter should include:
 - a. Description of how the employment directly relates to the STEM degree
 - b. Statement that employer will report your termination or departure from company to ISSS Office
 - c. Should be on company letterhead
4. *Completed Form I-765*
 - a. Check the box for “**Renewal of my permission to accept employment**”
 - b. #10. The A#, or USCIS #, listed on your current EAD card.

- c. #11. Check “Yes.” For which USCIS office, write the name of the service center(s) that processed your OPT (ex: Vermont Service Center). For “Date(s),” write the start on your EAD card.
 - d. #16. Eligibility Categories: write (c) (3) (C).
 - e. #17. For degree, write the level and CIP STEM major code on your I-20 (Ex: PhD 00.0000). You **must** write your employer’s e-Verify number on your I-765 in order for your application to be approved.
5. *Photocopy of current EAD card*- front and back
 6. *G-1145 (Optional but recommended)*- Notice of electronic receipt; PDF available online at USCIS.gov

Step 2

The ISSS Office will review your documents. You will receive a notification once the STEM I-20 has been printed and mailed to your personal address. Our office mails standard USPS (3 to 10 business days).

Step 3

USCIS **must** receive your application **within 60 days** of when the I-20 with recommendation is printed by the ISSS office or before your current EAD expires, whichever comes first. USCIS cannot receive your request more than 90 days before your current EAD expires. Any applications which are not submitted in the proper time frame will be denied. After you receive your new I-20 from the ISSS Office, **sign the new I-20** and mail the following documents to the USCIS Service Center with jurisdiction over your residency area (more instructions will be included with your new I-20):

1. A **photocopy** of **ALL** previous I-20s that have been issued to you, including the new I-20 with STEM recommendation and any I-20s from schools that you transferred from. Please, **DO NOT** send originals to USCIS.
2. A copy of your transcript or diploma proving you graduated with a STEM eligible degree
3. Original Form I-765 with original signature **in ink**
4. Letter from employer
5. A photocopy of your current EAD card (front and back)
6. A printed out version of the electronic I-94 (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>) and/or a photocopy of your I-94 card (front and back) if you still have a paper I-94
7. A photocopy of the identifying page in your passport
8. A photocopy of your F-1 visa(s) in your passport, even if it has expired
9. Two passport photographs taken within the past 30 days. For picture requirements, go to: http://travel.state.gov/passport/guide/composition/composition_874.html. Write your name and I-94 number on the back of each picture
10. A check or money order for \$410.00 made payable to the “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”
11. Optional: G-1145, Notice of Electronic Receipt (available on USCIS’s website)

What are the reporting requirements while on STEM OPT?

Notify the ISSS Office ***within ten days*** when there is a change in:

- Legal name
- Address
- Email and/or Phone Number
- Employer/Company name
- Address of Employer
- Employer e-Verify number
- When employment changes or terminates (start and end dates)
- Changes in status (i.e. H1B, Permanent Residency, etc...)
- Material changes to I-983 Training Plan, including, but not limited to: *change in employer's EIN, reduction in student compensation that is not tied to a reduction in hours worked, any significant decrease in hours per week student engages in training opportunity, changes to the employer's commitments or student's learning objectives as documented on form I-983*. Student is required, with their employer's cooperation, to submit an amended I-983 reflecting these changes to the ISSS Office within 10 business days.

See Next Page: Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions on 24-month OPT Extension

1. Can I continue working after the end date of the first OPT period if I applied for OPT extension but have not received a new Employment Authorization Document?

*Yes-- if USCIS received your application for the 24-month OPT STEM extension **before** the end date on your EAD you can continue employment while the STEM extension application is pending until a final decision is made **or** up to 180 days past your EAD end date, whichever comes first. If the application is denied or withdrawn and your 12 month EAD has expired you must stop working immediately.*

2. Can I apply for OPT extension more than once?

Yes. Under the new ruling, students are eligible for up to two STEM extensions per lifetime so long as they earn another STEM-qualifying degree at an increasing education level (ex: one 24-month STEM extension for Bachelor's degree, additional 24-month STEM extension for Master's or Doctorate degrees) and have been authorized for another initial 12 month OPT period.

3. Can I apply for 36-month OPT immediately instead of getting an extension later?

No-- you can only apply for 12-month OPT first and then apply for 24-month OPT extension later on.

4. Can I travel if I applied for OPT extension but have not received the new Employment Authorization Document?

No—USCIS advises that you only travel after you receive the new EAD card. You cannot travel in the time between when your initial EAD card expires and when you receive your new EAD card for STEM extension.

5. What documents do I need to re-enter the U.S. while on OPT extension?

- a) I-20 signed for travel by the ISSS Office within the last six months*
- b) New Employment Authorization Document (STEM EAD card)*
- c) Valid passport with valid F-1 visa*
- d) Job offer letter or proof of employment with e-Verified company*

6. Can I hold more than one job while on a STEM extension?

Yes, but all of your employers must be e-Verified, you must work 20+ hours per week for every employer, and all must complete a Form I-983. Please notify our office of any additional employers and promptly submit the I-983 for each.

7. What are the unemployment limits for 24 month STEM extension?

With a 24-month STEM OPT extension, students are allowed an additional 60 days of unemployment beyond the initial post-completion OPT limit, allowing for a total of 150 days of unemployment. This includes weekends. Please note when applying for STEM Extension, student cannot exceed 90 days of unemployment in the initial 12-month OPT.